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## Saluting Employees

# 2015 SHSU/CMIT criminal justice scholarship recipients announced

Sam Houston State University's College of Criminal Justice, in partnership with the Correctional Management Institute of Texas, recently awarded SHSU/CMIT scholarships to TDCJ employees Michael Bates, a captain at the Ellis Unit, and Natalie Isaac, a program supervisor with the Counsel Substitute Program. The intensive Master of Science degree program teaches criminal justice professionals critical management skills required to advance in the field of criminal corrections. Both scholarship recipients will begin the Criminal Justice Leadership and Management program this fall and plan to continue their careers with TDCJ.

"I am ecstatic and truly blessed," said Isaac. "I am still on Cloud Nine. This is a huge accomplishment for me."

Captain Bates hopes to use his academic training to help improve the agency, saying, "I am very much looking forward to learning new techniques (in order to) grow as a manager and leader."

The master's degree in Criminal Justice Leadership and Management is offered either online or as an intensive weekend program. The 36-hour course is intended for criminal justice professionals currently

working in mid-management or senior-level positions, or those seeking career advancement in the field of criminal justice. The degree program is designed for professionals whose work and family commitments prevent them from returning to campus as full-time students, and allows working professionals to continue their criminal justice career without interruption while completing a two-year degree program.



Captain Michael Bates (left) and Program Supervisor V Natalie Isaac (right) were awarded SHSU/CMIT scholarships to attend the Master of Science in Criminal Justice Leadership and Management program.

Doug Dretke, executive director of the CMIT, commented on the important role higher education provides for upcoming corrections professionals, saying, "It is an honor to support emerging leadership within TDCJ through this collaborative scholarship. Michael Bates and Natalie Isaac represent the many dedicated, committed and passionate

employees who serve the state of Texas and seek to enhance their leadership capabilities as they work to fulfill the public safety mission of the agency."

Captain Bates currently oversees correctional officers who supervise 2,500 inmates at the Ellis Unit in Huntsville, where he has served most of his seven-year career with TDCJ. Bates began working with the agency while a business administration student at SHSU, has worked administrative segregation at the Ellis Unit and spent two years as a lieutenant at the Clemens Unit in Brazoria County.

Ms. Isaac is a Program Supervisor V with the Counsel Substitute Program, which secures and protects the due process rights of offenders charged with disciplinary infractions by providing training to staff to assist offenders during the disciplinary process. She is a certified mediator and has worked in the Equal Employment Office helping to solve employee complaints and issues. "I enjoy working with employees to get their issues solved," Isaac said. "I enjoy helping people to get through tough times." Isaac began her career at TDCJ in 1997 as a correctional officer, serving in the Estelle and Byrd units for six years, and has worked as counsel substitute for eight years. ●